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THE QUEST.

THE BUDDHIST PRINCIPLE OF CHANGE.[1]

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There is a view of the general fact of change which all philosophies would endorse and confirm. This is the popular view, inimitably expressed by the French proverb: *tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe.* It is also, with corollaries, the religious view. "The life of man passes by like a galloping horse, changing at every turn, at every hour" (Chwang-tzŭ);

"Change and decay in all around I see.
O thou who changest not, abide with me!"

Albeit it is worth mention, in passing, that in all world-religions the emphasis thrown on the great fact of change is curiously slight save for the notable exception of Buddhism. Exponents of this creed have not failed to bring out the insistence they have found on change as thus envisaged.

But philosophy, once it gets astride of this 'galloping horse' of change, may go further than either the popular or the religious view. It may say:

[1] Read before the Quest Society, June 7, 1917. References where not otherwise given are to P.T.S. (Pali Text Society) editions.

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ultimately, fundamentally, there is only change. Repose, fixity, permanence are illusions. There are in reality, *i.e.* beneath our customary way of perceiving, no immobile things that get moved externally, or that persist in time, breaking up gradually. They are fictions of sense and intellect. "There are changes, but no things that change."[1]

Buddhism, like Christendom, stands not only for a popular and for a religious culture of many branches, but also for a philosophy with a history. Where, in respect of such a philosophical gallop, does Buddhist philosophy get up and ride, and where does it dismount? Does the attitude of Theravāda doctrine (I mean, of the philosophic thought evolving for many centuries, first in N. India, then in Ceylon and Further India) correspond at all in its nature and its range to, say, that notable outcome in European philosophy which we associate at present chiefly with the name of Henri Bergson?

There are two main obstructions hindering the establishment of an adequate comparison. It may seem unreasonable to try to compare a philosophic departure which has at the back of it the results of some centuries of scientific developments, let alone of *literary* philosophizing, with a philosophic evolution which, however notable, has in these two essential bases been relatively starved.

Again, the documents of this evolution are as yet, to a mere European, most imperfectly accessible. In knowledge of them we have scarcely got beyond the corresponding position of Christian culture at the beginning of the Renascence, which knew little of its Plato, and had its Aristotle largely from Arabian

[1] H. Bergson, *La Perception du Changement* (Oxford, 1911), p. 24.

sources, and which was scarcely aware of its own poverty in materials. So even now Indologists, pursuing the Theravāda philosophy no further than the Commentaries of the 5th century A.D., discuss the submergence, in India, of Buddhist metaphysic in the rising flood of Vedāntism and other mediæval lines of thought, oblivious of the quietly continuous development that appears in the works of Buddhadatta, Anuruddha, Sumangala-Mahāsāmī, Ariyavaṃsa, as well as of Dr. Ledi Mahāthera of present-day fame—to mention no others—who have handed on the torch of psychology and philosophy in Ceylon and Burma. Until, however, by the quietly persistent work of the Pali Text Society, editions, not to mention translations, of the typical writings of these luminaries are produced, it is a difficult matter for even a reader of Pali to acquire a historic perspective of Theravāda philosophy in its continuity. My excuse for speaking on it at this immature stage is that we have at least a little more than the foot wherefrom to speculate about Hercules.

And whereas the first of the two obstacles I have named is a historic fact that can in nowise be got over, so that Buddhist philosophy even up to the present day will seem archaic beside the scientifically and linguistically finished products of European thought, there is, in comparing them *as philosophies of change*, always this interesting feature to recollect: The philosophic tradition of Europe, rejecting the Herakleitean theory of change as more real than fixity, suffered the written expression of it to die, and its influence to be handed on chiefly in the scientific speculations of the Atomists. In its turn, and after many centuries, science has imposed a philosophy of change on Europe. But Buddhism literally built its philosophic foundations

on a theory of change. With the whole field of science in a relatively rudimentary state, it grasped by intuition a principle of change which, in many features, anticipates that which we have seen put forward to-day as the result of profound investigation and analysis.

What then is that principle of change? Let us examine its earliest expression in the oldest Pali books. Here anyway the evidence is entirely accessible. There are still obstacles to a complete understanding, as I shall presently indicate, but at all events the Pali Text Society has published all the oldest materials.

The fact of universal and continuous change is expressed by several more or less synonymous terms: *a-niccha*, impermanence; *añña . . . añña* (=the Latin *alter . . . alter*) 'now one, now another'; *aññathatta*, otherwiseness, alteration; *vipariṇāma*, fluctuation; *khaya*, dissolution; *vaya*, evanescence; *vāya*, mobility; *bhava*, becoming; *udayabbăya*, rise and evanescence, and others. But the first three are employed in the passages most crucial for our purpose.[1] In fact they exhaust the two shades of meaning in our own curious, if useful, Latin term 'change.' Take anything you like that is obviously changing in time or space, material or mental, *x*:—at any given moment *x is*, at another moment *x is not*. Thus *x* is impermanent, 'in the sense of not being,'[2] as the Commentators say. Or *x* is now *x* with a co-efficient of *y*, or if you like of *n*. Thus *x* is altered (*aññathatta*), and may proceed to alter so much that eventually we call *x y*. At a given moment a baby boy lies on my lap. At

[1] Dr. Ledi distinguishes, under *aniccha*, metastasis (*vipariṇāma*) and subsequent modification (*aññathābhāva*). *Vipassanādīpanī* (Rangoon), translated by U. Nyana. *Vāya* is *primarily* 'wind.'

[2] *Abhāvaṭṭhenāti aniccaṃ.*

another given moment a young soldier leaves me for the war. My baby is gone, changed; my boy has evanesced.

In the older books of 'Suttas'—the Four Nikāyas—change is usually presented in this latter guise of the evanescent or impermanent, fleeting, transient. The other notion of 'otherwiseness' is used in more analytical Suttas of a psychological or philosophical content. The reason is fairly obvious. The Buddhist movement, as we know, was at the outset a movement of protest, dissent, reform in matters religious, social, ethical. It saw its chief enemy in the current and popular beliefs as to certain things being permanent, eternal, a ground for a feeling of rest and security in belief,—of ill-based rest, of false security. Namely, in the great mystery of life there were believed to be these three stable, real, perduring things: The I or soul of man; the world wherein that soul was born and could be reborn; the life in heaven once attained. The doctrines of the Dhamma or cosmic law denied permanence to all these things. It took for its ultimate view a vitalistic aspect of things. That is, it saw everything *sub specie vitæ*, as being governed by the law of life. What is that? To be subject to birth and to decay and death, with an apparent, more or less static interval between. Life might be renewed in recurring geneses, but it could not persist eternally in any conceivable phase, else it was not life.

Thus the physical world considered under each of its main constituents: earth, water, fire, air—resolved in all Buddhist philosophy to these four elements: the extended, the cohesive, the calorific, the mobile—and as composing either human bodies, or other substances, is said 'to manifest evanescence, to dissolve, to be

subject to impermanence, transience, to perish."[1] And this verdict is extended to the universe as a whole, which periodically undergoes revolution and evolution (*vivaṭṭa, saṃvaṭṭa*).[2]

Again as to life in heaven, Suttas on legends concerning the celestial spheres and their denizens relate of complacency felt by gods[3] in the security of their tenure: "This our life is permanent (*nicca*), fixed (*dhuva*), eternal (*sassăta*), absolute (*kevăla*); influctuate in its nature; without rebirth, decay or death; and beyond it is no further salvation." Then the Buddha, intuitively knowing of this delusion, transports himself to that heaven, and on being greeted with a display of the same confidence, shakes, as it were, head and finger at them: "Alas! the good god! how ignorant he is! Alas! the good god! how ignorant he is! inasmuch as he will be calling permanent, fixed, eternal, absolute, bound to persist, that which is impermanent, mutable, temporary, relative, and bound to end . . . beyond which there is a different salvation."[4]

Lastly as to the soul or spiritual principle in man —I have elsewhere pointed out that the Buddhist argument against such a permanent entity was levelled not against the belief in a changing, growing soul that could yet, unlike all other mental or physical phenomena, defy death, but against the belief in an *unchanging divine* soul that transmigrated, as the soul in other cults is held to do. The argument runs that nothing supremely divine, *i.e.* perfect happiness, power and immutability, can be claimed for a human being

[1] *Majjhima*, i. 185f. [2] *Anguttara*, ii. 142; iv. 100f.
[3] *I.e.* by beings who have lived as men on earth.
[4] *Saṃyutta*, i. 142. Cf. my *Buddhism*, 1912, pp. 58f.

who, as essentially changing, must inevitably, sooner or later, suffer and suffer helplessly.[1]

Next as to the use of the philosophical terms 'otherwiseness,' 'becoming otherwise,' 'alteration.' In one of the many analytical discourses on organ and field of sense we read: "Because of two things sense-impressions arise, namely because of a given organ and a suitable object. Now each of these two is always impermanent and changing and having a state of otherwiseness. Thus the dual process itself is vibrating and fleeting and evanescent and changing. Its conditions are so; how should the impression itself be permanent? And the feeling and the perception arising in consequence, these also are necessarily vibrating and fleeting, evanescent, changing."[2]

Once more, to take a concise philosophical statement: "All conditioned things[3] have three characteristics. They arise, they evanesce and they have otherwiseness of duration."[4] Thus the static interval, if it be more than a limiting point, is only apparently static. It too is changing. And the relatively swift and all-inclusive 'becoming-other-ness' in mental life is brought out in a curious simile. "Nothing in the world equals the rapidity of *chitta* (consciousness, mind).[5] It is hard to find an illustration to show how swiftly mind comes and goes." "It were better if the unlearned man in the street considered this body of four material elements as the soul of him rather than mind. Wherefore? The body may last anyway for years, even a century or longer. But what is called

[1] Cp. *e.g. Majjhima*, i. 138; *Vinaya Texts*, S.B.E., i. 100.

[2] *Saṃyutta*, iv. 67f.

[3] *I.e.* all things that have arisen through a cause (*sankhāta*).

[4] *Anguttara*, i. 152. [5] *Anguttara*, i. 10.

mind or intelligence or consciousness, arising and ceasing in the night, is other than that which arises and ceases in the day. It is even as a monkey in the forest, travelling through the timber, clutches one bough, looses that and clutches another."[1]

The curt wording in the archaic Sutta is felt by the Commentator, Buddhaghōsha, to be ambiguous, and he guards the reader from inferring that any day- or night-long duration of a conscious state was here intended—a heresy refuted elsewhere in the Canon.[2] For, he adds, in one instant many myriads of 'consciousnesses' arise and evanesce.[3] This elaboration in explicitness of the apparently more leisurely rate of change as illustrated in the Sutta came about during the 1000 years or so that elapsed between the compiling of the text and Buddhaghosha's new edition of the Commentary.[4] And later commentators screwed up the rate of mind-flux even higher.[5]

The earlier documents, as we have seen, bring us thus far, that of the two elements in the notion 'change,' namely, impermanence and alteration, nothing whatever in this conditioned universe is permanent. Everything, but especially mind, is perpetually altering, as composite phenomenon, nay even in its elements, and is either coming to be or passing away or undergoing intermediate change. The ancient canonical phrase *sabbe sankhārā aniccā*—"all things are evanescent"—has ever been and is for the Buddhist a motto parallel to the *kismet* of the Muslim. And the surviving work on his doctrines next in point of

[1] *Saṃyutta*, ii. 95. [2] *Points of Controversy* (*Kathāvatthu*).

[3] *Sāratthappakāsinī*, the Commentary on *Saṃyutta*.

[4] Based on older versions.

[5] Cp. *Compendium of Philosophy* (P.T.S., 1910), p. 26.

time after the Canon and nearest to it in sanctity—the *Questions of King Milinda*—is in this matter equally emphatic: "There are three things, sire, which you cannot find in the world. And what are the three? That which, whether conscious or unconscious, is not subject to decay and death—that you will not find. That quality of anything which is not impermanent—that you will not find. And in the ultimate sense there is no cognition of a personal entity."[1] Let it not be supposed that this decided attitude is characteristic of Indian literature generally. There is no such emphasis to be found in any of it that is pronounced to be pre-Buddhistic. The only occurrence of the word 'impermanent' in any but late Upanishads is in one verse of the *Kaṭha Upanishad*,[2] itself not among the oldest; and even this is declared by Dr. Deussen to be a later interpolation, so much is it in conflict with the context.

Besides this emphasis on universal change, the Suttas give us the notion of change as an orderly or determined continuity. The series of phenomena that interested most deeply the early Buddhists, as they interested Sokrates a little later, were those of life, especially the vital phenomenon of mind. And it is to life and to mind that we find, in the Suttas, the first application of those two figures so closely associated with the dynamic speculations of Herakleitus—the stream and the flame.[3] They became in later Buddhist thought no less closely bound up with its central principles. But this is not true of it at its inception.

[1] S.B.E. edition, ii. 102. On the last sentence cp. *Points of Controversy* (P.T.S.), p. 8.

[2] II. 10.

[3] He 'flourished' 80 years later than, *or* almost coincidently with, the Buddha, according as we use Buddhist *or* European dates for the latter.

For all the wealth of simile and parable in the Suttas, and the Anthologies of the Fifth Nikāya, and in spite of the fact that no simile occurs oftener than 'river' and 'fire' (*nădī*, *aggi*), they are always used to illustrate other doctrines than that of impermanence.[1] Just once or twice however the pregnant word *sota* ('stream') is heard in the older books: "They who drift down the stream of becoming" (*i.e.* rebirth)[2]; "he understands the stream of consciousness"[3]; "my perception was as the flame in a fire of chips, changing as it rose and ceased."[4] I think this is all. But in the little eleventh century manual by Anuruddha, *Compendium of Philosophy*, the *vade mecum* to this day of the Buddhist student, the *sota* stands out in its terse and dry paragraphs: "So . . . consciousness (*citta*) . . . after rebirth goes on, in the absence of any process of cognition,[5] in unbroken flux like the stream of a river till the uprising of death-consciousness."[6]

I cannot as yet quote a mediæval application of the flame simile. But here is flame used as a striking instance in the latest words of Buddhist philosophy, written, after all these centuries, especially for the English reader: "Just as that flowing river or burning flame appears to those who contemplate it as a mode of motion, not as something static, and the motion itself consists in a continuous process of vanishing past acts and of manifested fresh acts, so all these determinations into various 'acts' are only series of distinct

[1] Cp. my 'Index to Similes in the Nikāyas,' *J.P.T.S.*, 1906-7, 1908. Dr. Oldenberg (*Buddha*, 6th ed., 1914, p. 299) maintains the opposite with regard to fire; and Mr. Dahlke sees in the Buddha's Fire Sermon a cryptic meaning of the *Inkraft* (inner force) of karma. (*Buddhismus als Weltanschauung*, 1912, pp. 54f.) But the context, taken with other fire-allusions, points only to an analogy with fever, inflammation, and the writers do not convince me.

[2] *Saṃyutta*, iv. 128. [3] *Dīgha*, iii. 105. [4] *Anguttara*, v. 9.

[5] See below p. 17. [6] *Op. cit.*, p. 153.

phenomena, mental and bodily, made manifest by way of arising and ceasing."[1]

But putting similes aside, we have, I repeat, to see that, even in the older books, the notion of change was conceived, not as successions of fortuitous discrete happenings, but as orderly, connected processes. The Buddha is represented as confronted with two extreme views. One is that of the Permanent Self: *A* does the deed; *A* reaps the result, *i.e.* in subsequent happiness or unhappiness. The other is that of the Absolutely Different Self: *A* does the deed; he ceases to be. *B* reaps the result. Was either view right? No, the Buddha replies, there is a middle doctrine which is right; and he repeats the formula known as Arising by Way of a Cause.[2] Perhaps we feel baffled and have recourse to the Commentary. There we read: "Here he shows that there is neither a doer nor a feeler in any ultimate sense, but that any effect [*lit.* fruit] comes from its conditions, and that without the conditions comes no effect." And far better than this is the same Commentator's explanation in another cognate context: "If we understand the effect or fruit as something arising in a series, we get no absolute identity or diversity, so that we cannot say the result proceeds from the same, or from something quite different. So we look in the adult for the results of something we cultivated in the child."[3]

We may regret that the Buddha did not, according to his editors, expound his Middle Way more as, for example, a Bergson would now discuss it. But 24

[1] Ledi Sayadaw, 'Some Points in Buddhist Doctrine,' *J.P.T.S.*, 1913-14, p. 159. Cp. also ib. p. 146 the Herakleitean use of flowing water and permanent 'river' by one who has certes never read of Herakleitus, unless it were through a Burmese book.

[2] *Saṃyutta*, ii. 20. [3] *Visuddhi Magga*, ch. xvii.

centuries stretch between the two prophets. The Buddha was the first Indian thinker to state causation as a universal law valid for mental as for physic ' life. And his standpoint, that a person so-called was just a stage in, and a label for, a causal process among composite phenomena, was for his hearers striking and pregnant, far-reaching in its effect. It led subsequent thinkers to envisage the universe of changing phenomena and constituents of phenomena under the aspect of an orderly causation proceeding by way of *upakāra*, or 'assisting agency.'[1] That is to say, *X* in causing *Y* was conceived as assisting *Y* to become, and that by being passed on into, or wrought up into, *Y*. And thus anything is *what* it is, *as* it is, not fortuitously but as a 'fruit' or result of an antecedent thing. Yet a little later in time the *upakāra* notion of a fecundating cause is developed into that of *satti* (=*śakti*), a term old as the Vedas, connoting (like Carlyle's 'canning') ability, efficacy, force. Ariyavaṃsa, for instance, an eminent writer of Burma in the 15th century, speaks of the *pacchăyasatti*, the causal force.[2]

The Greeks began to think in terms of force a good deal later than the Buddha's day. Aristotle uses the word 'by force' (βίᾳ)[3] but makes no fruitful use of it. Pali had also of course words to the same effect—*sahasā*, *pasayha*—but it did not occur to the early thinkers to apply either these or *satti* to philosophical theories. It was not till Stoic thinkers developed Aristotle's theory of causation, exploiting his adumbrated 'active' and 'passive'—τὸ ποιοῦν, τὸ πάσχον—that

[1] Commentary on the *Paṭṭhāna*.

[2] Not Lucretius's simple apposition *vis causaque*, but *causæ vis*. *De Rerum*, i.

[3] *De Animā*, iii.

the antithesis of force and matter started on its career as the corner-stone in European cosmology: the pusher and the pushed. The relatively late appearance in Buddhist philosophy of a term equivalent to *vis* is an interesting problem. To answer it, we might derive a suggestion by first discovering why, in the 3rd century B.C., the Mediterranean thinkers developed the science of physics. The Stoic philosophers of Cyprus, the Ægean, Italy, Carthage were contemporaries of Archimedes. In connection with what other knowledge did the term *śakti* influence mediæval Buddhists?

Gotama Buddha may have been, relatively to his *milieu*, a master of knowledge (*sabbaññu*). But if there was, for him to take up and utilize for his teaching, no body of positive scientific knowledge, it follows that there would be no words of pregnant import for him to use. It is not historical honesty to read into the archaic diction of the old Suttas more than the knowledge of their times could fairly be said to express. On the other hand, the longer one studies them, the clearer seems to be the want, for an intellect far above the level of its age, of tools—tools in the shape of scientific materials and terminology. We seem to feel the mind of 'the immeasurable Gotama'[1] labouring under this want in its pioneer questing. He could scarcely appeal to his hearers' intelligence, in expounding a theory of a self-fecundating flux in terms of force or influence, lest they should see in those terms a reference to the personal intervention of a theodicy or divine fiat—a notion which was precisely what all his teaching strove to eliminate. Personal intervention is the sense in which βίᾳ, 'by force,' appears in the *De Animā*. If,

[1] *Theragāthā*, 1089.

as M. Ed. Le Roy writes, "the function of philosophy is to criticize the works of knowledge,"[1] then must philosophy wait upon knowledge, that is upon the growth of science.

So much is clear from the Sutta: in the evolution of the act,[2] not one and the same person persisted as self-identical, sowing and reaping, nor were sower and reaper totally different. The latter was a causal outcome of the former. Or, as Buddhist philosophy preferred to say, the reaping was a causal outcome of the sowing. Later developments came to see in the process, by the aid of developed knowledge and new terms, phases in a continuous series of force-wrought changes, changes which meant that each imagined unit in the series was assisting agent to the next, by passing over into it, informing it, wrought up in it. But to the Buddha's hearers, the only explanation that would mean anything more or less intelligible would be a reference to the newly formulated doctrine of cause and effect. This theory was set out both in abstract terms, to this effect, that "a cause is that without which an effect cannot come to be," and also as applied to the ever-recurring life of a sentient creature in terms of sentience.[3] The latter form is usually employed as, and by the Theravāda tradition to this day has been regarded as stating, no less than the abstract formula, albeit in less general terms, a doctrine of universal causation. As claiming to solve the problem of apparently persistent personal identity in a cosmos of unceasing change, it is of the greatest interest in our

[1] *A New Philosophy* (London, 1913), p. 144.

[2] *Kamma-vivaṭṭa*, a term ascribed in the same work to the Buddha, i. 85.

[3] *Ency. Religion and Ethics*, Art. '*Paṭicca-samuppāda.*'

inquiry. It is the expression of the Buddha's theory of becoming.

This is borne out by its employment in another Sutta to reconcile two metaphysical extremist views: "All is"; "Nothing is"—so similar to the Greek antithesis as represented by, say, Melissus and Gorgias.[1] The elements of matter and mind are for Buddhists ultimate realities. But they have never associated permanence with these. They are 'conditioned,' 'produced by causes'; they arise and cease; they are perpetually becoming.

Leaving these pioneer intuitions, let us notice a few points in the mediæval explications of them bearing upon our inquiry.

First with respect to the elements of matter. Matter or *rūpa*—a word almost as broad in import as 'phenomenon'—is defined as "that which changes its form under the physical conditions of heat, cold, etc.," following the older definition in the Suttas.[2] And the four essentials or elements in any material phenomenon, however relatively concrete their meaning may have been in the older books, have come in later philosophy to signify extended quality, cohesive quality, calorific quality, mobile quality. Every material phenomenon is compact of these four in differing proportions. Hence the whole material universe has this element of mobility, 'vibrating or oscillating; moving its co-existent qualities from place to place.'[3] And since, in addition to this conception of essential movement, there is the yet more fundamental property in it of becoming and evanescence, since moreover there is no concept of inherent rest or rigidity to

[1] *Saṃyutta*, ii. 17. [2] *Ibid.* iii. 86; *Compendium*, p. 271.
[3] Ledi Sayadaw, *Paramattha-dīpanī* (Rangoon), p. 240.

counter-balance in space or time this mobility, but only static intervals in which change (otherwiseness) is still proceeding,[1] we may fairly say that in the Buddhist physical world movement is more 'original' than rest.

With respect to mind this has been already made out. In the original books the notion of a constant mental continuum, interrupted by fully conscious processes of perception, etc., is not, as far as I can discover, clearly made out. Such processes are said to arise from external stimuli and to constitute something which, in becoming, was not previously in existence. "Have I not taught thee by many methods that consciousness arises from a cause; that except from a cause there is no coming into being of consciousness? . . . Do ye see, bhikkhus, that it is something that has become (*bhūtaṃ*); that the becoming is according to the stimulus; that if the stimulus cease, then that which has become ceases?"[2] The notion of some sort of mental life, however, ever proceeding as a concomitant condition or factor of life itself, soon emerges, in the later analytical books of the Canon, in the term *bhavanga*—'factor' or 'condition of becoming,' 'becoming' standing for existence or life. Coming to the *Milinda*[3] we find it compared to the flow of life in dreamless sleep. And in the citation above from the *Compendium* it is compared to a river, and is *contrasted* with mental life when intellectual processes are going on.

Here we come to a very striking anticipation of modern theory. I have used the phrase 'interrupted' by conscious process as characteristic of the Bergsonian

[1] See above, p. 7. [2] *Majjhima*, Sutta 38. [3] ii. 163.

hypothesis. In fact, it was a sentence in Dr. Wildon Carr's *Philosophy of Change* that lit up for me the significance of the Buddhist language: "Elements of experience . . . are . . . interruptions of movement. . . ."[1] Interruption involves arrest; and our intelligence, building itself by the lessons of touch-based vision, is held (in the Bergsonian hypothesis) to create a world of fictitious static 'states' and 'things.'[2] If it were built up by the teaching of the ear, the world as we know it might wear a very different aspect.

But M. Bergson is more Buddhist than Dr. Carr, for he uses the actual Buddhist term of cutting on or into. "Things are constituted by the instantaneous cut which the understanding practises, at a given moment, on a flux of this kind."[3] The *Compendium of Philosophy* states the traditional theory of perception thus: "When, say, a visible object . . . enters the avenue of sight and, the life-continuum (*bhavanga*) vibrating twice, the stream of that continuum is cut off, then consciousness . . . of an apprehended visible object arises and ceases." Thereafter, according to the relative intensity of the stimulus, follow the remaining moments in a full act of perception. "After that comes subsidence into the life-continuum."[4]

There exists quite a group of later commentaries on this manual, but I am not yet in a position to state that any one of them brings out the full significance of this interpretation of an act of perception for a principle of change as the fundamental reality.[5] The

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 39. [2] *Creative Evolution*, p. 261.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 262, '*la coupe instantanée.*' Cp. also pp. 331. [4] *Op. cit.*, p. 125f.
[5] A transcript of the most modern of them has just arrived from Burma, and I hope that a transcript of the most classic among them is in preparation.

manual itself seems to be concerned simply with the (very concise) exposition of currently accepted doctrines in the interest of students, even to the extent of doggerel mnemonic verses as summaries to each section, and to be putting forward no fresh developments requiring discussion. Nowhere indeed have I yet met with any Buddhist disquisition conscious of the temerity we may feel in consenting to, let alone putting forward, a theory that our intelligence, trained for racial life by sight and by the need for action, subjectively arrests the 'flux of reality,' creating fictitious 'states,' like the arm of a London policeman in the mid-stream of traffic. For us this late-born temerity—this revenge of rejected Herakleitus—may be a back-wash of the wonderful passing of 16th century astronomy, revealing the daily lie told us by our senses of a static earth, of a sun as mobile adjunct. It may have required a Copernicus to breed a Bergson.

But Buddhist philosophy may be said to set out with the position that its proper function is the inversion of common (*i.e.* popular, conventional) sense; that the opinion of the man in the street (*puthujjăna*, many-folk) is never more than conventionally right; that the true, the real, is not the apparent.[1] Hence it saw perhaps no need to defend the gradual and *natural* evolution of its own original, never rejected doctrine of impermanence and 'otherwiseness.'

It is a natural step from sense-perception to memory. The Bergsonian theory of change has revealed to Europe that a philosophy of change, when conceived *sub specie vitæ*, can put forward a sounder explanation of memory than any theory of a persistent

[1] Cp. *Points of Controversy* (P.T.S., 1915), p. 63, *n.* 2; *Buddhist Review*, 'Expositions' by Ledi Sayadaw, 1915, pp. 253f.; *J.P.T.S.*, 1913-14, 'Some Points of Buddhist Doctrine,' p. 129.

modifiable self, however much such a theory might purge itself of popular spatial notions, such as the *boîte à souvenirs*, or a sort of bagatelle-score memory, with pegs moved along a line of life. The living continuum has its past wrought up into itself, recalling to the imagination George Eliot's pretty phrase: "As the sunshine of past mornings is wrought up in the bloom of the apricot." Our problem is not how we remember, but how we come to forget. Remembering becomes negative. It becomes the elimination of what we would forget.

Now while the Buddhist theory of cause as assisting agency, and as an informing influence (*satti*), coupled with a full and interesting theory of relations, into which I cannot enter here,[1] enabled the philosopher to explain memory after a fairly Bergsonian fashion, I will here only mention that Pali literature has no specialized term for memory, from its beginning till the present day. *Sati*, as I have pointed out elsewhere "is not wholly covered by 'memory,'" it is "rather the requisite condition for efficient remembrance or thought of any kind, namely, lucidity and alertness of consciousness. It is a quality rather than a specific *direction* of consciousness," expressing the opposite of distraction and of superficial thinking.[2] The more perfected your *sati*, the better can you penetrate present realities, review the facts that are past, foresee the events that are coming.[3] Buddhist mental training might be called one long insistence on the need of *sati*.

If it be asked whether Buddhism conceived the flux of things, whether material or mental, as essen-

[1] S. Z. Aung in *Compendium*, p. 42; *J.P.T.S.*, 1915-16, Dr. Ledi, 'On the Philosophy of Relations.'

[2] *Buddhist Psychology* (1914), p. 90.

[3] Cp. Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 234.

tially indivisible and only 'cut' into states or units, or as successions of momentary units, discretes, or particulars,[1] I am not yet prepared to give a documentary reply of an adequately historical kind. I could give instances of mind referred to as minds or 'consciousnesses' ('*chittāni*') of momentary duration, but very few. The rule is to speak of *chitta* in the singular, of *dhammā*, which may mean mental things or 'states,' in the plural. But to judge by the writings of Mr. Shwe Zan Aung,[2] present Buddhist philosophy insists strenuously on the essential unity of this mental life as a flux in time. "Each 'one-momentary' state of consciousness (*eka-kkhaṇika-cittuppādo*) is logically complex, but psychologically of a single indivisible whole." He uses the Bergsonian simile of the spectrum[3] and applies the 'assisting agency' definition of cause in expounding this unity. I cannot trace a similar insistence in the case of physical change and movements in space. Nor have I yet elicited from him any traditional authority equally explicit on the subject. But he refers to the *Compendium* as expressing indivisibility in any given mental complex. This is not quite the same thing as indivisibility in duration of a series of so-called states.

To turn for a moment to the field of commentarial legend: it is not irrelevant to notice how, in certain stories, religious conversion is brought about through the power of the Buddha being exercised to accelerate the normal rate of change in the life-flux. Some youth

[1] *Ibid.* p. 150; and *The Monist* (1915), p. 405: "The real man too, I believe, . . . is really a series of momentary men, each different one from the other, and bound together . . . by continuity and certain intrinsic causal laws."

[2] *E.g.* 'The Philosophy of the Real,' *Jl. Burma Research Society*, April, 1917, p. 8.

[3] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 11.

of either sex, much obsessed by physical beauty, is made to see the vision of a lovely maiden swiftly maturing, ageing and falling crumpled up on the ground. And the much shaken beholder is recorded, in one case, as saying:

> "*As bidden by some power age o'er her falls;*
> *Her shape is now another, yet the same.*
> *So this myself, who ne'er have left myself,*
> *Seems other than the self I recollect.*"[1]

Such a vision modern applied science could no less give us, were someone to be photographed with sufficient frequency during a life-time in one pose, and were the films then cinematographed with that rapidity so much affected by the cinema-mechanic. As applied to the life-history of plants, the method is impressive. Will Christian teaching ever unwittingly plagiarize Buddhist legend by securing the life-reel of some persistently devoted human specimen?

But this fragmentary and inadequate statement of the scope and significance in the Buddhist principle of change must here end. Further materials, as has been said, may enable a more complete essay on the subject to be compiled. But it may be said by those who are acquainted only with Buddhism as a religious movement of the 6th century B.C., that we cannot expect to find in its doctrine any disinterested philosophical theory; for is not Buddhism, first and last, the study of an Ideal, of a Goal, of a Way Out, of a Danger and an Escape? Would not any doctrine of change as the great reality in life be studied, not disinterestedly, as a problem in the quest of truth, but chiefly in relation and subordination to the Great

[1] *Psalms of the Brethren*, cxviii.; cp. *Sisters*, p. 82.

Escape, namely from pain and sorrow and the causes thereof?

There is truth here as far as the statement will carry us, but it doesn't take us all the way. There is a parallel in Christianity. That started as a Gospel of Escape, and ended by becoming established *as* European culture, and annexing all the secular learning of those centuries during which it was sole director of all the Schools. In the same way there is a considerable difference in urgency between the missionary Suttas and the works written long after the establishment of the *Sāsana* or Order as paramount and its annexation, first of Indian culture, then of the philosophic intelligence in the countries it converted.

Nevertheless there is a unity in the evolution of Theravāda thought that cannot be claimed for that of Christian philosophy, with its Pagan annexations, so that we might well look to find the Theravāda ideal borne on the stream of universal flux, like the Most High riding upon the wings of the storm. We find the contrary. It will not see in Change a star—to take Emerson's metaphor—to which it might hitch its waggon. It was so occupied with the fatal certainty in this life, that happiness was bound to evanesce and change into unhappiness, that it forgot the other swing of the pendulum, that the blissful sense of returning happiness was *also change.* Life and experience were said to be painful, or liable to pain, *precisely because they were ever changing.* And life and experience, in Buddhist tradition, had been going on for each person a most awfully long time, yea, from everlasting. The completed perfected person had surmounted all change, save a few years of the last of his lives. *Anicca* is ever a term of baneful import. Even the blessed and

beneficent changes as the aspirant passed into stage after stage of the path of assurance, and broke fetter after fetter—even these are never labelled as modes of benign *anicca* and otherwiseness. And the final release from life after the saint's death, though never discussed, is alluded to in terms of non-change as the unborn, the unageing, the undying, the permanent, the uncaused. The saint was held to have had enough of

"*Spinning down the ringing grooves of change,*"

and gladly said:

"*Well! of all that now have I made an end!*"[1]

And I find nothing to correspond to the eternal youth that pulses in Bergson's sentence: "The more we steep ourselves in the sense of universal becoming, the closer we feel drawn to the principle in which we live and move and have our being, an eternity of which must not be an eternity of immutability, but an eternity of life and of movement."[2]

And yet——. More than one writer has called Buddhism the gospel of a senile decadent epoch in the history of India. Yet it is noteworthy that, in the whole of Pali literature, one goal is never invoked as desirable, and that is Rest. The Arahant is said to have laid low his burden, to have done his task, but concerning that task the words for tired, weary, and rest simply do not occur.[3] Greek philosophy hovered around the notion of rest; Christian hymnology welcomes it; the modern Hindu poet tells us some-

[1] *Psalms of the Sisters*, p. 163.

[2] *La Perception du Changement*, p. 37. Or this: "Humanity . . . is one immense army galloping beside and before and behind each of us in an overwhelming charge able to beat down . . . the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death" (*Cr. Evol.*, p. 286).

[3] Save perhaps for two lines in the Sisters' Anthology, by a weary housewife and an old lady respectively, ver. 1, 16.

where: "The waves of turmoil are on the surface, and the sea of tranquillity is fathomless."[1] Buddhist philosophy and anthology both regard as supremely desirable energy, concentration, insight, serenity. And far away for most, near only to but a few at any time, there is held to be the one 'state' of utter peace, inconceivable in content and undescribable, since concepts and speech are the children of *life*.[2] It is a curious paradox. Or if my feeble torch throw its ray amiss, it may kindle a clearer light from elsewhere and

"*Ita res accendent lumina rebus.*"[3]

C. A. F. Rhys Davids.

[1] Tagore.

[2] *Sutta Nipāta*, 1076, "Whereby one might speak of him, that for him is not."

[3] *De Rerum*, 1115.

THE HOWL, THE GRIN, THE SMILE AND THE LAUGH.

Fleet-Surgeon C. Marsh Beadnell, R.N.

The Early Cry of the New-Born.

The biological facts of recapitulation teach us that the early development of the individual is a kind of synopsis of the past history of its species. Every animal in its upward growth from the single egg-cell to the many-celled adult is forced to make a hurried journey along the ancestral path taken by the dead-and-gone members of its race. The young frog and the young child possess the ancestral gill of the fish. This gill-stage is not harmful to the child and is of distinct use to the frog, and so, instead of being suppressed by natural selection, is retained by heredity. Lower animals complete this ancestral journey, that is attain full development, in a few months; but man, with his speech-centres which, like tender plants, demand assiduous care and prolonged cultivation, takes some fifteen or twenty years to do so.

If we turn to what Sir Ray Lankester has so aptly described as "that most mysterious and wonderful casket of ancestral secrets and unfathomable destiny" —the human infant—we find that for the first day or so it is apparently deaf to all but the loudest noises; then later it begins to recognise its mother's voice and will pick it out from other voices; but not until a yet

further lapse of time is it able to discriminate between the many and diverse sounds within the nursery. When about eight months old its delight in sheer noise is positively fiendish; objects are thrown about and dashed to the ground in a transport of joy at the ensuing clatter. But side by side with the evolution of the child's body is going on a corresponding evolution of its capacity to analyse sounds, and in this mental evolution again it faithfully repeats the various stages of sound-analysis passed through by ancestors; and if at any time we feel inclined to resent the din set up by these little limbs of Satan, we should remember, and be grateful to them for, the very interesting story they are unfolding for our special benefit.

In vocal powers, again, the child recounts a no less exciting tale, and the various evolutionary phases consecutively staged before our eyes are true representations of the past and in perfect accord with those phases of speech which, from other sources of evidence, we are led to believe existed in the long racial line. In the first place the very arrival of the infant into the extra-uterine world is announced by a loud primitive yell, and for weeks afterwards the little intruder keeps reminding those around him of his importance by an incessant monotonous howling. This definite and characteristic howling period is followed by a somewhat indefinite one of vowel-intonation wherein the child says 'ey' for yes but cannot say 'no.' At about the ninth month it indulges in 'instinctive words,' such as the 'kuk-kuk' of disgust, 'um-um' of satisfaction and the 'goo-goo' of joy. About the fifteenth month the child begins to associate words like 'da-da,' 'bow-wow,' with the percepts 'man,' 'dog'; but not for another half year does it associate these words with the

concepts 'father,' 'terrier.' In the eighteenth month voluntary language dawns and the child instinctively imitates the sounds heard, and for the first time succeeds in saying 'no.'

In the second year comes knowledge of good and evil; the child knows when it has done wrong. In the third year the instinct of play and make-believe are to the fore; the child commits one incongruity on top of the other, always however with the insatiable desire to know, know and yet know. It toddles hither and thither; everything goes to its mouth; it breaks things, opens them out, mixes them up, pours its broth into grandpapa's watch, puts the gold-fish in the doll's bed, and crams the doll into the fish-globe. In the fourth and fifth years the old ancestral instincts of destructiveness and cruelty are dominant, especially in the male child. He pulls the cat's tail or his small sister's hair, squashes spiders and removes the legs and wings from flies. When not engaged in such Hunnish acts he shows incipient powers of abstraction as regards 'time' and 'space.' The sixth year is to an alarming extent devoted to teasing others, and he fights with a calculated intent to do others bodily harm. In the seventh year he is swayed by the spirit of rivalry and the instinct to kill things for food and sport. In the ninth year he shows us with pride his 'collections' —eggs, coins, stamps, nibs, shells, buttons, and what not—and fills us with a conflicting mixture of alarm, disgust, admiration and envy at his insatiable and omnivorous appetite. In the tenth year the gestures of the sneer and of defiance are in evidence. The main characteristics of the twelfth year are boastfulness, conceit, and love of 'showing off'; and two years later he revels in the display of physical and mental strength

and enters with zest into games of skill and endurance. In the sixteenth year the sexual instinct appears, the voice alters, Adam's apple becomes prominent, and modesty and shyness are marked; he becomes awkward and nervous in the presence of the very girls whom, but a year ago, he chased and bullied and treated with scant respect. In the eighteenth and nineteenth years love and jealousy appear and he will fight his closest chum over the appropriation of a wink or a smile from a 'flapper.' In the twentieth year the parental instinct is potentially present, and in this and subsequent years the altruistic and humanistic sympathies mature. Such, briefly, are some of the milestones past which the mind of the average, normal, healthy English schoolboy must pass in its hurried journey along the old beaten ancestral route.

But we must go back to the infant. We saw that the first stage of phonation consisted in the emission of a monotonous howl. This howling habit is unaccompanied by the shedding of any tears, for it has not yet evolved into those other forms of phonation, such as 'crying' and 'sobbing,' that are accompanied by lachrymation. The very primitive nature of this howling of the new-born child is proved by the basal position and fundamental character of the nervous mechanism concerned in bringing it forth; for this is such that even those unfortunate brainless creatures known as anencephalous monsters can cry lustily. It is significant that a definite habit of howling is much more in evidence in the human than in the simian infant. Why is this? It must have been of great importance to recent ancestors of man, when wandering about in search of food, for their offspring to possess a reliable means of communicating with them.

In the darkness of night or amid the tangles of gloomy virgin forests, parent and infant were liable to separation, and a cry from the latter would at once bring the former to its aid. Perhaps this is why the child still cries so much in the dark.

> "An infant crying in the night:
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

In this way it is probable that, while fear and pain act as stimuli to the cry in the majority of offspring, these factors have sunk into the background in their relation to that of the human infant, which is now an ingrained habit that owes its survival value to the fact that it keeps those responsible for the child's welfare in constant attendance.

In the wild state crying has, of course, the obvious disadvantage of attracting friends and foes. For this reason natural selection as a rule only permits resort to the cry under rare and pressing circumstances. When from the man-like ape there emerged the ape-like man equipped with his new-found weapon 'reason,' one of the first things he did was to place his offspring beyond reach of prowling enemies. But this circumventing of natural selection and elimination of the very factor which hitherto had checked *habitual* crying carried its penalty, for subsequent generations of infants became more and more clamorous and subsequent generations of fathers had to put up with more and more disturbed nights.

The same principle is illustrated among lower animals whenever a corresponding change to that just indicated occurs in their environmental conditions. When rooting about the jungles, the wild boar does not

habitually grunt like the domestic pig. Pheasants and partridges are very silent when feeding with their young. Mr. Pycraft thus describes a covey of partridges foraging for food: "The male runs ahead and stands for a few moments surveying everything. If all is well, he goes on, uttering a low 'zut-zut,' while the female, crouching low, follows with the brood, seeking seeds and insects at every step." How different the state of affairs among their domesticated cousins in the farmyard. Artificially protected from her natural enemies, the hen never ceases clucking nor her chicks chirping; and it is change of environment alone that has brought about the marked contrast. The faint 'cheep' of the young partridge and the wanton chirp of the chick, the plaintive wail of the baby monkey and the lusty bawl of the human infant, are vital phenomena specially adapted in each instance to the preservation of the individual and species. Clamorous nestlings as a rule are those whose parents build homes in places inaccessible to prowling enemies; silent ones are those who are lodged on or near the ground, natural selection personified in weasels and stoats having enforced on them strict silence. As examples of the former might be mentioned the nestlings of the rook, sparrow, swallow and starling, and of the latter those of the wrens, warblers and game-birds. It would be possible to divide the birds up into two great categories; those who are helpless at birth and require prolonged parental care, and those who run about and fend for themselves almost as soon as they are out of the egg.

Silence is a great characteristic of the members of the reptile class, and so too is the ability to run about and look after themselves immediately

after birth. Birds, as we know, are direct descendants of the reptiles, and we shall not be far wrong if we conclude that, as a rule, birds with silent precocious young hatched in rude simple nests or mere scoops in the ground are the more primitive, and those with noisy young of the helpless type hatched in high and inaccessible nests are more specialised. So deeply rooted is the instinct of keeping silent when danger threatens that some young birds who are in the habit of calling while still in the egg, will at once become silent if the parents, whom, of course, they have never seen, utter an alarm. The young Norfolk plover may be handled and will hang limp, with eyes closed, quite silent and shamming death—an old reptilian dodge.

Not long ago when walking over a hillside overlooking what some old-time wag facetiously christened the German Ocean, I came on a young gull running about amid the stones and heather. Directly the little creature saw me it crouched flat to the ground, motionless, its mottled plumage making it appear so like a lichen-covered stone that for a time I was not quite sure that it had not, after all, run off. I was allowed to go up to it, and even stroking its head failed to elicit the slightest sound or the flicker of an eyelid. I then picked the bird up, shook it gently and placed it back on the ground. This seems to have convinced it that its stone-shamming trick was seen through and that it must resort to more heroic measures. The first thing it did was to bring up the whole contents of its stomach in one act; it then ran, balancing itself in its ludicrous bipedal gait by means of two absurd apologies for wings, and as it ran it screamed loudly to its parent, who had been silently watching from a distance and now came shrieking with threatening swoops over-head.

Evacuation of the contents of the alimentary canal is a well-known concomitant in man and lower animals of the emotion of fear. The advantage of a habit of this kind is somewhat complex and varies according to the particular species of animal. Here it is a sop to Cerberus, as when the terrified kittiwake disgorges its last meal to the pursuing skua, who adeptly catches it before it falls into the sea; there it is a weapon of defence against intruders, as in the brooding gannet and, as I know to my cost, in the Fulmar petrel. It may divert the attention of the pursuer to the ejected substance; or it may blind and stifle him, as in the case of the Bombardier beetle who discharges acrid vapours in the face of his pursuer; or it may act as a screen, as when the cuttlefish escapes behind a cloud of ink. In all cases the act lightens the body and thereby facilitates flight. In man the act is probably atavistic.

Now I said that the fledgling gull screamed in its fright; but I have often noticed that many nestling birds, such as young owls, robins and tits, hiss like a snake when in this state, a fact replete with evolutionary significance when viewed in the light of recapitulation and bearing in mind that birds are offshoots from the old reptilian stem. But mammals, too, branched off from the reptiles, and when frightened or displeased will hiss; even man, the lord of creation, will do so if he scalds his fingers, or witnesses a play he does not approve, or hears political opinions that do not happen to coincide with his own. Indeed it is impossible to avoid the somewhat startling conclusion that, in the cry of the mammal, the song of the bird and the speech of man, the threatening hiss of some old prehistoric reptile still finds occasional echo.